THE REMONSTRANCE OF THE COMMONS OF ENGLAND.

TO THE House of Commons assembled in Parliament.

Preferred to them by the hands of the SPEAKER.

Mr. SPEAKER,

PRejudge us not, we pray you, because the title of this paper is a Remonstrance, *not a* Petition; *the cause is, for that* Petitions *have had ill successe of late, yet the* matter *will be the same, though the form differ.*

We send this (whatsoever ye will call it) to the Honourable House of Commons, who are the representative body of the whole Commons of England, *and we desire to present it by you, who are the* Speaker *of that House.*

The end of our desire is Peace, *and we hope we shall not erre in the way, when we entreat you to be Mediatour. Master* Speaker, *all that we desire of you, is to deliver this to the House, to procure it to be read, and to obtain us as good an answer unto it as you may.*

And now we addresse our selves to the honourable House it self.

WHen this Parliament was called (after severall unhappy breaches of some former) we comforted our selves with an hope of a redresse of all our grievances, and we made choice of you for our *Knights, Citizens,* and *Burgesses,* to serve for us, and we did put our confidence in you, and beleeved that you according to our trust without any by-respects, would have studied onely the peace and good of the Kingdome, and we cannot be yet out of hope, but that ye will perform it in the end.

But you must not take it amisse, if as persons grieved, we tell you where our griefs lie. And to prepare our Cure the better, we must desire you to call to your remembrances.

1 That we are still the true body of the Commons of England; you, but the representative.

2. That we have not so delegated the power to you, as to take off the governours of us and our estates, you are in truth but our procurators, to speak for us in that great Councell.

3. That in right we ought to have acceſſe to thoſe whom we have thus choſen, and to the whole Houſe, as there ſhall be cauſe, to impart our deſires unto you, and you ought not to refuſe us.

4. That by involving our votes in yours, we had no purpoſe to make you perpetuall Dictators.

5. That we never intended, that you ſhould have that latitude of power as to imbarke us all in a Civill Warre, to the deſtruction of us and our poſterities.

6. Much leſſe had we a thought, that by any your votes ye would or could draw us in to any Acts of diſloyalty or diſobedience againſt our naturall Leige Lord, to whom by the lawes of God and man, we do owe and will pay all allegiance and fidelity.

Wherefore we muſt claim this freedome which belongs unto us, as free-born Subjects, and as perſons intereſſed in the good and ſafety of this Kingdom, as well as your ſelves, that ye will ſpeedily take thoſe things into your wiſe and religious conſiderations, which belong to our peace, and which we out of the deep ſenſe of our preſent miſeries, and of the apparent ruine of us all (if not timely prevented) do now offer unto you.

None of which ſhall be any new fancies, or dreams of diſtempered brains, but ſhal be ſuch as have their grounds on apparent truth, & a cleer evidence.

For firſt, we do profeſſe to all the world, that we are reſolved with our lives and fortunes to maintain the true Proteſtant Religion eſtabliſhed by the Laws in this Church of England. To maintain our well ſetled Government under a Monarchy, according to the known laws of this land. To maintain the juſt liberty of our perſons and property of our Eſtates, according to the Rule of thoſe Lawes. To maintain the juſt priviledges of Parliament, without which our Laws can hardly be continued.

And in the aſſerting of theſe, we beleeve we have the concurrence of both the Houſes of Parliament, for ſuch have been their daily Proteſtation.

And for the Kings Majeſties Opinion herein; he hath by many Declarations, ſolemn proteſtations, and religious vows, before God and man, declared himſelf ſo fully and freely, that it is his unchangeable Reſolution to live and die in the maintainance of all theſe; that we hold our ſelves bounden in reverence to his perſon, and in Chriſtianity, to beleeve that he will faithfully perform his word with his people.

And we have this further aſſurance thereof, in that he hath deſcended ſo low from his throne, as to acknowledge ſome errors which have ſlipt him in his bypaſt goverment, & to undertake not to give way to the like hereafter.

We wiſh with all our hearts, that you would with the ſame ingenuity acknowledg your errors alſo, & amend them, ſo we might ſoon (by Gods bleſſing) have our peace reſtored, & by your induſtries be made a happy Nation.

Let us then cleerly and freely expreſſe in what things we find our ſelves grieved, which have been voted, ordered, and acted by you during this Parliament, wherby the cure intended is become worſe, then the diſeaſes under

which

which we formerly languished, & we must with as much cleanness and freedom protest against them, if they be not speedily reformed and remedied.

The particulars are these.

1. *That under the colour of advancing the true Protestant Religion, incouragement is given to Anabaptists, Brownists and all manner of Sectaries, which multiply in every Corner; which must be reformed, or our true Religion is lost.*

2. *Under the pretence of hatred of Popery (which we also detest, as far as their superstitious and idolatrous tenets are inconsistent with the true reformed Protestant Religion) the Booke of Comm-prayer (which is established by Law) is cried down by many, and all decent orders in Gods outward worship; and every man left to the dictate of his own private spirit: But let the Laws against Papists and Sectaries (the two extreams) be put in due execution, we shall thank you for it.*

3. *Vnder the colour of regulating the Ecclesiasticall Courts, and taking away the High-Commission Court, all spirituall Iurisdiction (for the coërcive part thereof, which is the life of the Law) is taken away, so that now no heinous crimes, inquirable by those Courts, as Adultery, Incest, &c. can be punished: No Heresie or Schisme reformed: No Church can be inforced to be repaired: No Church-officers, as Church-wardens, &c. are compellable to take upon them their offices, or perform their duties, no not to provide Bread and Wine for the Communion: No Parsons or Vicars can be inforced to attend their Cures, or to give satisfaction for the pains of them who do: No tithes can be recovered by their Law, nor other Church-duties. We beseech you think what will be the end of these things at the last.*

4. *Vnder the name of reforming the Church-government, ye endeavour to take away the function, and being of Church-governours, as Bishops and their Assistants the Deans and Chapters, so to take away at once the preferments of learned men, and the incouragements of learning: In the name of God let the abuses be taken away, but not the uses also.*

5. *For the rectifying of matters amisse in Church Discipline, and some things in Doctrine also (as is pretended) an Assembly of Divines is propounded to be convocated and consulted with: The matter is right, but the manner is surely amisse, and so we are likely to lose the benefit of the substance for the errours in the circumstance; which is, That in this intended Convocation, the Divines are not nominated by Divines, who can best judge of their abilities (which is the legall way) the greatest part of those who are named, are known or justly suspected to be persons ill disposed to the Peace of the Church, and addicted too much to Innovation; you your selves (being all Lay-men) are to be the onely Iudges of what shall be propounded, and what determined; the Divines but your assistants, and the King is totally to be excluded from having any voice or hand in it: And (as it is propounded) this is to be a perpetuall Convocation, if the Houses of Parliament so please.*

6. *Vnder the colour of freedome of Preaching, seditious Sermons are preached daily, even in the hearing of many of your selves, who traduce the Kings Sacred*

on, ſlander His Goverment, and in expreſſe termes, encourage the maintaining and continuing of this unnaturall and unchriſtian civill Warre, and yet none are puniſhed for it, which makes us feare that this is, and long hath beene made by ſome, to be the principall engine to kindle this fire of Hell, to the juſt ſcandall of all good men, and ſlander of our Religion, this doctrine comming ſo cloſe to that of the Jeſuits

7 *And divers worthy, learned, and painefull Preachers have been committed to priſon by you for delivering their conſciences freely and religiouſly, & preaching of obedience to their Soveraigne: theſe things we obſerve unto you, as tending namely againſt the maintaining and propagation of the true Proteſtant Religion.*

Touching that part which concerneth the maintaining of the Lawes, we ſhall obſerve alſo ſome things unto you, wherein your owne practice differs much from your profeſſions: a prepoſterous way to perſwade us, or any other by-ſtanders.

1 Ye aſſume that power to your ſelves, that ye by a bare vote without an act of Parliament, may expound or alter a knowne Law; whereas the Commons houſe formerly aſſumed to themſelves no ſuch power, but in order towards the making of a new Law: nor did the Houſe of Peeres challenge any ſuch thing: But they haveing the power Judicature, as Judges they proceeded according to the Rules of the knowne Lawes, and upon their honours are anſwerable for the juſtneſſe of their Iudgment, as other Courts are upon their oathes.

2 Ye make your owne orders and ordinances to be as Lawes, and compel them to be obſerved, and with a ſtricterhand: which may bind the Members of your houſe in their priviledges, but have not nor ever had the force of Lawes, until by both houſes and the Kings Conſent they were confirmed.

3 And for your owne obſervation of the Lawes of the Land, ye make your ſelves to be ſo farre above the reach of them, that by your orders and ordinances ye enjoyne the Iudges and Miniſters of Iuſtice to forbear (contrary to their oathes) to proceed in their ordinary courſe, where ye pleaſe.

4 Ye make an Ordinance to put the Militia of the Kingdom in ſuch hands as ye pleaſe, and ſhall confide in; and this without the King, and expreſly againſt his Command. 5 Ye Poſſeſſe your ſelves of the Navie Royall, and appoint Admiralls and other Officers by Sea without the King, and uſe thoſe ſhipps againſt the King himſelfe.

6 *Ye* take the Kings Caſtles, Forts and Ports, the places of great ſtrength in the Kingdome, and keepe them againſt the King himſelfe, *Hull*, and *Portſmouth*, and *Windſor Caſtle*, and theſe three laſt actions appeare to us to have beene done by Deſigne, for

7 The pretence at firſt was for the preſervation of the Kingdome, againſt ſome forreign Enemy; but when none appeared in many moneths (and we now beleeve none ſuch in truth ever were) a warre for the Parliament, againſt the *King* himſelfe was raiſed for the preſervation of the King.

8 And thoſe which refuſe to joyne in this warre with you, or to contribute

unto

unto it, which giving or lending of money, horse, armes, &c. ye proscribe as Malignants, and persons ill-affected to the Common-wealth; although we see not how it can be lesse then Treason against the K. to joyn with you therin.

9. But to all those who are your Commanders or Officers of your Armie, ye give large and even profuse entertainments and rewards; but out of our purses, who give you little thanks for it. Thus much may suffice to give a taste how the laws are, and how they are likely to be maintained, in the course we are now in. And for the Liberty of our persons, and propriety of our Estates, we shall say a little in the next place, and by a few particulars judge what we may hope for therein.

1. Ye take the Kings treasure, ye intercept his revenue, possesse his houses of accesse, and all these for his own service, and if any attend him or assist him, they are condemned as Malignants, Popish, evill Counsellers and Enemies to the State.

2. Ye have by messages endeavoured to perswade our Brethren of Scotland to join in your Rebellion against your Soveraign, and this was not done by some private men alone, but ordered by the Votes of your House.

3. *Ye* condemn the Rebels in Ireland (and that very justly) for their horrid rebellion there, and yet your selves do greater and more horrid acts of of barbarous hostility against the King, even in his own person, in England: and when ye have been charged with it ye would excuse it by saying, that it was not your fault, but the fault of the King himself, and of the Counsellours and Cavaliers about him, that he went himself in person into the battle, which he did with that magnanimity and Kingly courage, as will adde to his honour and your shame, whilst the world endureth. Thus your action is become odious to God and man, and your excuse for it ridiculous.

4. And as if ye had shaken off all subjection, and your selves become a State independant, ye have treated by your Agents with forreign States: Such usurpation upon Soveraignty, was never attempted in this Kingdom.

5. *Ye* command your own orders, ordinances, and Declarations to be printed and published *cum privilegio*: But if any thing come from the King, which may truly inform and disabuse the people, ye forbid those to be published, and commit them to prison who do it.

6. The monies advanced by gift, or adventure, or act of Parliament, and souldiers prepared for Ireland to reduce the Rebels there, ye have from time to time diverted to maintain this unnaturall warre in England; so ye do visibly lose the Kingdome of Ireland, that ye may be the better enabled to lose the Kingdome of England also.

7. *Ye* have shewed your selves so averse from peace, that ye have voted there shall be no cessation of Arms, lest by a free treatie a peace might ensue; This is your carriage towards the *King* himself.

And lest ye might be accused to be juster to the subject then ye are towards your Soveraign, these things ye have done to the subject also.

1. *Ye* have made an Ordinance that the twentieth part of mens estates,

must

must be payed towards the maintainance of this Rebellion, and ye appoint those who shall value that twentieth part; and why by the same reason ye take not the tenth part, or the one half, we see not: and for the levying of it, ye ordain your Collectors shall distrein for the sum assessed, and sell the distresse, and if no distresse can be found, the persons of these notable offendors are to be imprisoned, and they and their families banished from their habitations.

2. But lest this should not have the colour of Law sufficient to blind the world, ye have lately made an ordinance for the Inhabitants of the Counties of *Northampton, Rutland, Derby. &c.* to pay and be assessed (by Assessors named in your Act) in imitation of the Statute lately made for the 40000l. and this, as is probable, shall in convenient time be extended to the whole Kingdom: so ye first cast your selves into a necessity to get mony, by making an impious war upon your Soveraign, and then out of that necessity ye compell your fellow-Subjects (who abominate the war) to maintain it.

3. And ye have yet a shorter and a surer way: where ye understand there is any money, plate, or goods to be had, ye send a party of Horse or Dragooners, to fetch it out of an enemies Country, because the owners are good Subjects to the King, or you suspect them to be so; and that alone is crime sufficient to apprehend them, to judge them, and to take execution upon them, and all this without the Ceremony of Law, by your absolute and omnipotent power, which cannot erre.

4. You discharge Apprentices and Servants from their Masters services, without consent of their Masters and Dames, and either perswade them or compell them to serve in your Army against the King: This is indeed the Liberty of the Subject.

5. Ye have imprisoned many for petitioning unto you (as if that alone were a crime) if the matter of the perition do not flatter you in your present courses.

6. And others ye have imprisoned, some for petitioning, and some for intending to petition to the King (as those Gentlemen of *Hertfordshire* and *Westminster:*) And yet God be praised, the way is open to petition to him in Heaven, and he will hear us in his good time.

Lastly, for your priviledges of Parliaments.

1. Ye forbid us to dispute them, ye alone are (as ye say) the Judges of them; but in former ages those also might be and have been judged by the lawes of the Kingdom: onely of offences committed by your own Members against your House, of these you are the proper Judges: and of the elections of your Members.

2. Yet these we conceive under your good favours, are to be thus confined, that every member of your House hath and ought to have as free liberty as any of them, to deliver his opinion upon every emergent occasion, and not to be committed, as some have been: ---- or put out of the House, as others have been, for speaking freely against the sense of the House, or rather of some members thereof.

3. The

3 The Priviledges of your House were never challenged til now, to extend to any Member which shall comit Treason, or Felony: but ye have now declared that no Member of the House, nor any others imployed by you in this horrid Rebellion, should be questioned for Treason, but in Parl. or at the least by leave of the House.

4. Ye have made a close Committee (as you call it) wherein a very few Members of your House onely are privy to your Councels, and what those few consult upon, is summarily reported to the House and that taken upon trust by an implicite faith of all the rest.

5 Many of the present Members of your House have had their elections questioned, but if they incline to those propositions which ye lay downe to your selves to uphold your Tyrannicall and usurped Goverment: you are so busied in the great affaires of State, that in two yeares space (for so long & longer ye have continued this Parl. already) ye have no leisure to determine those questions, lest you should loose such a one from your party,

6. Sometimes when a matter of importance hath beene in debate, they have put it to the question, and upon the question it hath beene determined, and the same question againe resumed at another time, better prepared for the purpose, and determined quite contrary; this we are well assured was not the Priviledge of former Parliaments, when many of us were Members thereof.

We do beleeve ye have many just priviledges for the freedome of your persons, for freedome of speech, but we never did beleeve that ye had a Priviledge to take the Scepter into your hands, to levy a Warre against your King, and to compell others to joyne with you in so execrable an act. We wish from our hearts that all these Observations were but fables and fictions, (as we have met with many from you to amuse us) but they are all undeniably true; our conditions therefore are most miserable, when thus instead of of maintaining the true protestant Religion, the Lawes of the Land, the just Liberty and propriety of the Subject, and just priviledges of Parliament, they are all of them radically and fundamentally destroyed, and that by you, whose duties and professions are daily to the contrary. And if any thing can be added to our misery, it is this, that we cannot see through the time, when this intolerable yoke of slavery which ye put upon your fellow subjects, shall have an end, seeing by the art of a few yee have contrived an Act, whereby ye have perfidiously over-reached both the King and people, to make this Parliament to be perpetuall at your pleasurses, that so your arbitrary power and tyranny over the Kingdome, might be perpetuated.

Yet one thing more may be added to our unhappinesse:

Fuisse fœlices, We were lately a happy people, and are now on a sudden reduced to such a depth of unhappinesse, that we are made a spectacle to the whole world, and the very object of their scorne: For,

We are (before we were aware of it) cast in a Warre, a Civill Warre, an irreligious and barbarous Warre, against our Soveraigne, our naturall Liege Lord.

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VVe are put into an inevitable way of poverty.

By being wasted in all quarters and corners of the Kingdome one by another:

By loosing our commerce at home, it being intercepted by the Armies, and almost no debts paid, occasioned specially by the priviledges of your Members, and such as ye priviledg.

By loosing our trade abroade, it being cast into the hands of strangers.

VVe loose our season for tillage and husbandry, which must of necessity introduce a Famine; and Famine doth but usher in a Pestilence: And Warre, Famine, and Pestilence, are the three great and fearefull Judgements of God upon a Nation.

Nothing can redeeme us out of these calamities, but a speedy Peace; and to prepare it, a Cessation of Armes: And then by good Lawes, as ye have already happily begun, to amend what is or hath beene amisse, without plucking up the foundations of Goverment.

We beseech you therefore at the last, to lay aside your affections, and in your judgments to provide for us, and for your selves, and for the honour of our Religion, the peace of our consciences, the preservation of our lives & estates, and for the salvation of our poore soules, to have pity upon us, bind up our bleeding wounds, cure the distractions of the the time, and make up the breaches betweene the King aad people, occasioned onely by a mis-understanding.

And if these our *Petitions*, or *Complaints*, or *Remonstrances* (call them what you will) may prevaile with you, we doubt not, but that the King of His grace and goodnesse will be intreated to bury all your by-past-actions in an act of oblivion, that neither the present age, nor the ages to come, may to the shame of this Nation, have cause to remember what have happened here in this last and worst age of the world.

But if all this, and all which in your great iudgments yee can adde unto it, shall not move you; We doe and shall protest to all the world, that with the hazard of our lives and fortunes, and all we can call our own, we shall endeavor to vindicate our selves from these inhumane courses. *Sed meliora speramus.* VVe hope for better things.

And we shall incessantly pray to God to perfect our hopes by blessing your Counsels.

FINIS.